

The Republic: An Endeavor at Comical Scriptwriting

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by:

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Lee Papa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Papa', written in a cursive style.

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Abstract:

The Republic is an exercise in comedy. This screenplay is an interpretation of small town life and its absurdity. The intent of my screenplay is to invoke laughter by exposing the vices of indigenous, yet prominent inhabitants. In addition, innocent people must confront those who engage in various taboo activities. The screenplay develops these themes and divides into a traditional three-act production. First, the protagonist is introduced to the illegal and immoral activities of the town's elite. In the following act, the protagonist becomes the unwilling member of their sleazy escapades. The final act concludes the screenplay with a series of confrontations between the protagonist and his newfound enemies. The three acts work in unison to provide a story of humorous circumstances and outrageous behavior. The audience will learn that even the most outwardly moral individual may carry the most immoral foible.

The Republic

By: Chris Flook

FADE IN

INT-HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

GRANT is out of breath as he reaches the 3rd floor. GRANT is not completely out of shape, he is of average build. However, he is a stranger to heavy exercise. GRANT is only 5'9"; his shorter legs take longer to advance up the stairs. Once at the top, he stops a minute to catch his breath and looks around. He peers at each of the door numbers and he resumes his pace down the hall. He finds the room and gently raps on the door.

GRANT
(whispering)
Mr. FREELY? It's GRANT.

STAN opens the door slowly. His eyes are wide-open; a panicked look covers his face. His lower lip is trembling.

STAN
Come in, please.

GRANT slowly enters the room. Behind STAN he can see that the room is in complete disarray. A lamp lies broken on the floor. Video cassettes and DVDs litter the rest of the room.

GRANT
What happened here?

STAN
I'm not really sure. We we're just havin' a little fun. We were arguing and she got pissed.

Stan turns and stares the bathroom door. GRANT pushes himself past STAN to get a better view. The better view allows Grant to see the debris. Porno tapes are everywhere...some in packages, some open, an empty case here, and another by the window. GRANT smiles to himself.

GRANT
(chuckles)
What did you say to make her so mad?
(pause)
Where the hell is she anyway?

STAN
I can't...I can't get in trouble for this. It
would ruin me. Christ...what about my daughter?
(pause)
Jesus.

STAN slumps back against the door and puts his head in his hands. GRANT stares at STAN and then towards the bathroom door. We hear a thud.

GRANT
Did you even check to see if she's alive.

GRANT cautiously approaches the door. He comes close and knocks gently against.

GRANT
Hello? Are you ok?

GRANT turns and looks at STAN.

GRANT
What's her name?

STAN
VICTORIA.

GRANT
VICTORIA what?

STAN
I dunno, just VICTORIA.

GRANT frowns and turns back to the door.

GRANT
Hello
(pause)
Miss Victoria, are you ok.
(pause)
Do you wanna come out and may be talk a
little?

VICTORIA
(muffled)
No!
(pause)
Not until that lying son of a bitch goes
home!

GRANT
What did he say?

VICTORIA
(muffled tears)
He said...he said he didn't love me-
(VICTORIA'S voice trails off in tears)

GRANT rolls his eyes and turns towards STAN.

GRANT
What do you want me to do? This is your
personal problem.

STAN

She's got my wallet and my cell phone.

(pause)

She threatened to call my wife.

(pause)

Please help me. I'll do anything, whatever you want.

GRANT

Anything?

STAN

Anything! Just get her outta there, please.

GRANT grabs a set of twenty keys from his pocket and approaches the door.

FADE-OUT

FADE-IN

INT-BILL'S FOOD GROCERY-MORNING

We start above the busy city and zoom, slowly, into the window of a small building. GRANT sits with his head looking down at the floor. He is wearing a red and white uniform. The uniform shows its wear. A portly middle-aged man sits across from GRANT. He peers at GRANT through thick glasses. Sweat emanates from every pore in his body. His hair is greased over his baldhead to one side. The MAN peers down at GRANT through thick glasses.

MAN

I don't think your *Bill's Food* material.

(pause)

It's not like I'm an unreasonable man. I understand that life gets in the way every now and again, but GRANT...I guess we're not all cut from the same mold.

(pause)

The life of a grocer is a tough one indeed.

GRANT

I'm sorry, what do ya' want me to do?

MAN

I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go.

GRANT scowls at his boss. He stands up and looks gazes with him.

MAN

Get out, you're fired.

GRANT

But...

MAN

Out, Grant!

ROLL CREDITS THROUGHOUT

GRANT stands up, flips his middle finger to the man, and proudly exits *Bill's Food*. He walks slowly towards his car and climbs in. The car hesitates to start at first, but on the third try, it finally goes. GRANT sits and looks out through the windshield. He sighs and pulls away. He hits a small bump in the road and the muffler falls from underneath his beat-up 1987 Chevrolet Beretta.

CUT-TO

INT-SMALL LOCAL BAR-AFTERNOON

GRANT sits and looks into the near empty mug of beer in front of him. He picks up the glass and swirls what is left of the beer before he downs it. The bar is empty, as usual, for this time in the afternoon. The only other patron is an old man down at the end of the bar...absorbed in the television. The bartender approaches GRANT.

BARTENDER

You want another.

GRANT nods and the bartender pulls him another draught from the draft. He sets it loudly down in front of GRANT. GRANT nods in appreciation.

VOICE (OS)

GRANT CONNOLLY, you thon of a bitch.

GRANT turns around to see where the voice is coming, his eyes light up as soon as he finds the source. A tall figure stands grinning in the doorway. His blond hair is kept unruly on the top of his head.

GRANT

MATT...hello.

GRANT stands to meet his old friend and extends a hand. MATT smiles and ignores the hand, hugging his friend. Matt, considerably taller than GRANT, wears a green and red-checkered suit. Matt's stature indicates a bit of arrogance; however, his prolific lisp offsets this.

MATT

It'th a little early to be having thome
drinkths. Critht it'th 11 in the morning.

GRANT just exhales somewhat annoyed.

GRANT

What brings you to town? Did commissioner
Gordon ring you on the critical Interpreters
phone?

MATT

Thut up! I had thome thtuff for DAD and no clatheths today. I jutht decided to head down to thee him.

GRANT

(mimicking Matt)

Clatheths, eh? Tho how'ths thchool doing?
Are you thtill thudying to be an interpretor?

MATT

(frowning)

Yeth, I'll be done in May.

(pause)

How about yourth?

GRANT turns his gaze from MATT to his empty beer glass. He sits and looks at it for sometime.

MATT

No, you didn't?

(pause)

You flunked out...

(pause)

again?

GRANT says nothing and just continues to ponder the complexities of his glass.

MATT

Are you thome kind of thtupid moron! You *were* tho thmart in High Thchool. What happened?

GRANT

I flunked out, MATT. I was trying to work two jobs. They ended up 'coming priority.

MATT

Why didn't you go back?

GRANT

I dunno. Why should I always struggle when everybody else has it so easy.

MATT

Well, what do you need?

(pause)

Maybe if you thtopped moping like a thilly baby.

GRANT

(glaring)

I don't know, Matt.

(pause)

How about a job.

GRANT pulls at his nametag until it rips from his shirt. He slings it across the table towards MATT. MATT picks it up and examines it.

MATT

(smirks)

Did you get fired too? Ha!

There is a hint of amusement in his voice. GRANT says nothing and looks almost as if he is ready to cry.

MATT

Man, your life ith kinda thitty right now, huh?

(pause)

Lithen, dad alwayth hath openingths thith time of year. I'll talk to him when I thee him today.

GRANT
You mean at his hotel?

MATT
Yeah. I can't promith you upper-management,
but he'll have *thomething*. He loveths you, in
any event he'll make room for you.

GRANT extends a short smile towards MATT and turns back to his
beer.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-GRANT'S APARTMENT-MORNING

The following day shows no relief for GRANT. He sits in his
shabby, one bedroom apartment staring at the television. On
the dilapidated coffee table in front of GRANT sits a number
of unopened bills. We can see *past due* on several of them.
GRANT ignores them. Matt is absorbed with an episode of
Days of Our Life.

A telephone interrupts GRANT'S zombie stare...

GRANT
Hello?
 (pause)
This is he.
 (pause)
Oh, MR. COOK, I didn't recognize your
voice.
 (pause)
Yes, ok I guess-
 (pause)
Ok.
 (pause)
When should I start?
 (pause)
Well, the bills do not seem to be
getting any smaller.
 (pause)
Ok, I'll be there.
 (pause)

Thanks a lot MR. COOK..
(pause)
Ok, Jon. Bye.

GRANT hangs up the phone and raises a hand in victory. He looks up at the clock and notices it is only 3:30pm. He slumps back in his chair and stares, blankly at the television screen.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-HOTEL DESK-NIGHT

GRANT sits slumped over the counter. He sleepily reads a *TIME* from a few months ago. The night is silent, save the ticking of the clock over his left shoulder. The clock reads 2:30. GRANT hardly takes notice of it, though. He drifts in and out of sleep at the desk.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-HOTEL DESK-NIGHT

The next night, GRANT sits with his arms folded across his chest. He peers at the front door, a look of longing crosses his face. He hears no sound, save the sound of the clock ticking over his left shoulder. The sound starts slow, then builds and becomes deafening in his ears. The monotony breaks by a thud from the lounge off to his right. GRANT is startled and jumps. He carefully, peers around the corner into the lounge. He sees nothing. He then hears water splash across the floor.

GRANT enters the room at a slow pace. His eyes dart, frantically from left to right. He approaches the door to the kitchen and slowly opens it.

MAN
(loudly)
Boo!

GRANT jumps back as a young man jumps out from behind the door. GRANT grabs his chest as he lets out a small scream. ALLEN, the night janitor has a hearty laugh at GRANT'S expense.

ALLEN

Dude...

(pause between laughs)

Man, you scream like a little girl.

(still laughing)

Maybe you should check your pants!

GRANT

Funny...who the hell are you?

ALLEN calms down a bit and extends a hand.

ALLEN

Hi, I'm ALLEN...hotel janitor.

GRANT

I'm GRANT...night desk clerk

ALLEN smiles back at GRANT with a warm toothless grin. ALLEN seems a little shady to GRANT. He wears tattered old jeans. In addition, ALLEN is wearing his best... an old, faded VAN HALEN t-shirt. ALLEN is unshaven, uncombed, and smells a bit like body odor.

ALLEN

Ah, so you're the new dude on the team.

ALLEN walks to his bucket and plops the mop down in it, rings it out, and slops it against the cold floor.

ALLEN

You enjoyin' it yet?

GRANT

Not really, nothin's happened. In fact, you're the first person I have seen since I started.

ALLEN

Just wait. Some nights this place is so packed you can't breath.

(pause)

That's why JON fired ERIC.

GRANT

Whose ERIC?

ALLEN

The last night clerk.

GRANT

Why was he fired?

ALLEN

He couldn't keep up on busy nights. Had a runnin' mouth too.

(pause)

Thirsty?

GRANT

A little...why?

(pause)

What happened to him?

ALLEN

(motions for GRANT to follow)

Dude...

(pause)

Let's just say they put him away.

ALLEN leads GRANT into the back of the kitchen where he opens a huge refrigerator full of import beer.

ALLEN
Here you go...

ALLEN tosses GRANT a beer.

GRANT
Thanks.
(pause)
What do you mean, *put away*?

ALLEN rolls his eyes.

ALLEN
Drink up girly...just stay away from
room 227.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-HOTEL DESK-NIGHT

GRANT brought a book this time to work. He seems absorbed in the novel until the desk bell pulls him from his reading.

MAN
Uh-hum! The usual room,
for me and the lady.

The voice is followed by some childish laughter. GRANT looks up and sees a well-dressed man, with thinning hair and a rotund belly leaning over to kiss a poorly dressed woman half his age. GRANT says nothing and just stares. He sniffs the air and wrinkles his nose. The man, noticing the pause, turns to look...

MAN
(slurring slightly)
C'mon ERIC...its too late to be
screwin' around-

The man takes a long, glazed look at GRANT.

MAN
Oh. You're not ERIC.

The man immediately straightens his posture and lightly pushes the girl a bit away from him.

MAN
Uh, I usually stay in Room 243 when...
(hiccups)
...when I am in town.

The MAN smiles at GRANT.

WOMAN
C'Mon Stan...I'm horny.

MAN
(to woman)
Shut up.

Smiling, GRANT looks at the MAN a minute longer and turns towards the cabinet behind him and grabs the key for room 243. He returns and rotates the guest book towards the MAN.

GRANT
Sign here please.
(pause)
Check out time is 12 o'clock,
complimentary breakfast is served-

MAN
(sourly)
I know the drill.
(pause)
Thanks.

The MAN finishes his signature, grabs the key, and turns towards the stairwell. The girl is two steps ahead of him. They quickly ignore GRANT and continue their childish laughter. GRANT looks down at the book and sees the man signed *I.P Freely*. A look of doubt crosses his face. He looks at the empty stairwell as the retreating sounds of the couple fade off in the distance. He shrugs and returns to his book.

FADE OUT-ON CLOCK READING 3:45

FADE IN-ON CLOCK READING 8:30

INT-HOTEL DESK-MORNING

GRANT is just finishing up with a guest as he signs the book. A middle-aged man, in good shape, with slightly gray hair approaches the desk with a huge grin.

MAN
So, things going well?

The man, putting both hands on the desk, leans well into GRANT'S personal space.

GRANT
Yes Mr. COOK. A little boring, but fine.

JON COOK'S face fades from a smile to a frown.

JON

You've known me for years, please
call me Jon.

(pause)

You'll make me feel like an old man.

GRANT

Sorry.

JON

So, you like it.

GRANT

Yeah, again it's a little slow.

JON just smiles.

JON

Some nights are busier than others.
What about guests?

GRANT

No problems-oh wait.

GRANT turns the guest book towards JON and points to the
signature of I.P. FREELY.

GRANT

I think this guy might have faked his
name-

(pause)

I think *I.P. Freely* is a little too
generic, don't you-

JON

It's fine. I know him.

GRANT
(surprised)
You know I.P. FREELY?
(pause)
He brought this-

JON
Listen, we lay a lot of importance on
privacy at the *Republic*. Do you
understand.

GRANT
(looking confused)
I think so.

JON
Sometimes Mr. Freely likes to bring, uh-hum
(clears throat)
...Mrs. FREELY in at night.
(pausing to wait for GRANT, no response)
And, some of are guests reward our employees
who serve well and keep a tight lip.
(pause)
Do you understand GRANT?

GRANT
Yes MR. CO- JON.

JON
Excellent. You can go if you want.

GRANT smiles and walks out from behind the counter.

JON
I'll see you tomorrow morning.

CUT TO:

EXT-GRANT'S CAR-MORNING

GRANT walks towards the door; he stoops and picks up a paper from the stack. He walks outside into the early spring morning. It is unusually warm, almost hot for this time of year. GRANT walks wearily towards his car. He climbs in and starts the engine, he pauses a second to look at the paper. The front-page headline reads, *Stanley Hutchins Named President of State University*. GRANT'S mouth drops open as he peers down the page. Below the headline is the picture of I.P. FREELY. GRANT stares up at the hotel through his windshield and sees I.P.'s/STAN'S light flip on.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-GRANT'S APARTMENT-EARLY EVENING

The television drones on in indistinct dribble. As the camera pans around a room, we can see GRANT lying face down on his bed. He is still wearing the same outfit as the night before. His snores reverberate across the room.

A telephone call breaks the simple serenity of the scene. It takes a minute for GRANT to wake up. On the fourth ring, he leans over and grabs the phone still buried in his pillow.

GRANT
(tired)
Hello?

JON'S face appears on the left side of the screen. Behind JON, the hotel is busy and lively. People, caterers, and others hurriedly move back and forth in the background.

JON (split-screen)
Listen up; we have this private party tonight.
Is there any way you can come in a few hours
early to cover the desk?

GRANT
(after a pause)
Sure, sure. I'll be there in twenty.

JON (split screen)
Thanks GRANT.

GRANT
No problem.

GRANT hangs up the phone and exhales heavily. He turns to examine the clock and sees that it is only 5:30. He sighs and tries to roll out of bed. Instead, he moves towards the edge and hits the floor with a heavy thud. He stands bolt upright and heads for the bathroom.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT-REPUBLIC PARKING LOT-EARLY EVENING

GRANT flies into the parking lot. His rapid speed soon comes to a slow crawl once he sees all of the cars filling the lot. People are coming and going from the hotel as well as coming and going from the lot.

GRANT
Holy shit!

GRANT pulls into a spot (as far away from the building as possible) and runs to the front. He meets JON at the door.

JON
(smiling)
Great. You're here.

GRANT
Sorry, I couldn't find a place-

JON

Stand behind the counter and hand out keys to guests when they ask for them.

(pause)

They've all paid already. Remember, *The Republic* honors privacy.

(pause)

Understood?

GRANT

Yes sir!

CUT TO:

INT-REPUBLIC-FRONT DESK-NIGHT

GRANT can barely see across the way into the bar, but he can definitely hear the raucous. Laughter and the faint tinkling of glass on glass fill the empty lobby. GRANT looks longingly towards the scene. He is so absorbed in the event that he ignores ALLEN sneaking up behind him.

ALLEN

They're swingers, you know.

GRANT

(turning)

What?

ALLEN

You know, they share their wives and such.

GRANT

I know what a swinger is...

(pause)

I don't believe that *they* are swingers.

ALLEN

Well, most are. Some of 'em are good old fashion whores.

ALLEN smiles his comic toothless grin and spits some tobacco into the adjacent trashcan.

ALLEN (continued)
Even that fat little old dude. He owns a chain of car washes. Can you imagine, he gets laid more than-

GRANT
(surprised)
That's the sheriff!
(pause)
And Dorothy Williams, the realtor.

ALLEN
(amused)
Yep, and the deputy mayor's in there. Frank Cardemon from Cardemon Motors-

GRANT
What are they all doing?

ALLEN
Drinkin'...havin' a good time. Two by two, they'll come here, grab a key from you, and head upstairs.

GRANT
This would be a gold mine for the paper!
(pause)
Just think of the story-

ALLEN
Nope! The guy who owns the paper is in there...
(pause)
...probably with his editor's wife.

GRANT

How do you know so damn much?

ALLEN

I've been here for seven years.

(pause)

They pay well when you keep quiet.

GRANT laughs and turns his attention to ALLEN.

GRANT

(laughing)

You've worked here for seven years!

(pause-still laughing)

How old are you?

ALLEN

(hurt)

I'm only 28. It pays good.

(pause)

Anyway, sometimes they get naked in the pool.
There's this little room where you can hide
and see out through a tiny little hole.

CROSS FADE INTO

We see ALLEN peering through a tiny hole watching a handful of middle-aged people swim.

FADE OUT

ALLEN winks and nudges GRANT in the ribs. GRANT just rolls his eyes as ALLEN exits from the lobby. GRANT looks back at the barroom to see a couple emerge from the bar. They head right for GRANT

WOMAN

A key please.

GRANT stares at the incredibly attractive women with the incredibly ugly and chubby car wash owner. He seems intoxicated and does not even acknowledge GRANT. He stares longingly at the woman and pets her hair lovingly. GRANT hands a key to the woman. She smiles at GRANT and turns with the man and walks up the stairs. GRANT'S eyes follow them until they can no longer be seen.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-REPUBLIC-FRONT DESK

A series of shots fade in and out. We see GRANT as he hands keys to several hotel patrons. Most of them sign incredulous names: *DICK CUMMINS*, *HARRY BALSAC*, *AMANDA HUGINKISS*, *CLAUDE BALLS* and the like.

Next, we see a well-dressed man hand GRANT a fifty-dollar bill and a videotape. GRANT smiles and hands the man a key and looks somewhat confused at the tape. Another shot reveals a newspaper clip showing the new University President breaking ground for a new building. The final shot shows the President checking into the hotel with his favorite prostitute.

LONG FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-REPUBLIC FRONT DESK-NIGHT

GRANT, wearing noticeably nicer clothes, leans against the front desk as he examines a new *TIME* magazine. The phone rings, he keeps his eyes trained on the magazine and answers the phone.

GRANT
(sounding mechanical)
Hello, *REPUBLIC* Hotel, this is GRANT.

There is a long pause, long enough for GRANT to notice. He stops reading the magazine.

GRANT

Hello?

STAN (OS)

(worried tone)

Yes, GRANT...

GRANT

This is he. Is something wrong?

STAN (OS)

(a little slurred)

Yeah, this is I.P. FREELY. I need a little help. Is there anyway you can come up and help me.

GRANT

I'll be right up.

CUT TO:

INT-HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

GRANT cautiously approaches the door. He comes close and raps gently against it.

GRANT

Hello? Are you ok?

GRANT turns and looks at STAN.

GRANT

What's her name?

STAN
VICTORIA.

GRANT
VICTORIA what?

STAN
I dunno, just VICTORIA.

GRANT frowns and turns back to the door.

GRANT
Hello
(pause)
Miss VICTORIA, are you ok.
(pause)
Do you wanna come out and may be talk a
little?

VICTORIA
(muffled)
No!
(pause)
Not until that lying son of a bitch goes
home!

GRANT
What did he say?

VICTORIA
(muffled tears)
He said...he said he didn't love me-
(VICTORIA'S voice trails off in tears)

GRANT rolls his eyes and turns towards STAN.

GRANT

What do you want me to do? This is your personal problem.

STAN

She's got my wallet and my cell phone.

(pause)

She threatened to call my wife.

(pause)

Please help me. I'll do anything, whatever you want.

GRANT

Anything?

STAN

Anything! Just get her outta there, please.

GRANT grabs a set of twenty keys from his pocket and approaches the door.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-HOTEL DINING ROOM-NIGHT

GRANT sits across a small table from VICTORIA. Her eye make-up is running down her face due to her incessant crying. A blanket drapes over her shoulders and she sips some kind of hot liquid.

GRANT

...sometimes we all say things that we don't mean.

VICTORIA

He's such an asshole.

GRANT

C'mon, you don't mean that. Why don't you go home and think it over, ok? Just let things calm down before you decide to do anything too rash?

(GRANT pauses)

ok?

VICTORIA

Ok.

(pause)

Thank you.

GRANT

That a girl. Why don't you hand me MR. HUTCHINS' cell phone-

VICTORIA

Who?

GRANT

I'm sorry, I meant MR. FREELY'S cell phone. I'll have ALLEN drive you home, ok.

VICTORIA looks at GRANT. Her face is a mess with streaking make-up and she rather resembles a clown at this point. We can see that GRANT finds this whole situation quite amusing. A smirk is on his face throughout their entire conversation. VICTORIA, tired and defeated, reaches into her purse, which she had been clutching tenaciously during the night's events, and grabs I.P. FREELY'S cell phone and wallet.

VICTORIA

Here! You tell that son-of-a-bitch that we're through.

GRANT

I'll give I.P. the message.

CUT TO:

INT-STAN'S HOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

STAN a.k.a. I.P. FREELY is pacing back and forth across his room. He is delighted when GRANT reenters the room. His elation is visible on his face.

STAN

Well?

GRANT hands STAN his wallet and cell phone.

GRANT

Everything's fine.

(pause)

ALLEN is taking her home.

STAN

Are you sure?

GRANT

Positive.

(pause)

MR. FREELY...she didn't even know your real name.

STAN exhales in relief.

STAN

Thank god almighty.

GRANT

No, thank GRANT almighty.

GRANT says nothing as STAN slumps down onto the edge of the hotel bed. He continues to stare at STAN intensely until STAN notices.

GRANT

So...

STAN

So, how can I repay you?

(pause)

Would you some porn?

STAN grabs a videocassette and hands it too GRANT. GRANT stands frowning at the box. A disgusting picture covers the front of the box, the title is in German. The picture is of someone in a leather outfit. Behind the individual is a sign which reads *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN* in bold, black letters.

GRANT

(looks disgusted)

Eeewww, no. What is it with you people and porn. You give 'em out like party favors.

STAN shrugs and drops the video. He opens his wallet and begins examining some of his bills. He grabs a few and extends them to GRANT. The bribe is stopped as GRANT pushes the money down.

GRANT

I don't want your money. I want something else.

STAN

Well, what the hell is it son?

GRANT

I want to go back to school-

STAN

(interrupting)

Our University?

GRANT
That's the one!
(pause)
I've been kicked out three times. They won't
let me go back.

STAN
Three times! Are you some kind of a moron?

GRANT glowers at STAN.

STAN
(seeing the joke has not gone over well)
Consider it done.
(pause)
I'll even arrange for some...financial
assistance.

GRANT smiles warmly at STAN.

GRANT
Excellent.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-REPUBLIC FRONT DESK-MORNING

It is morning of the following day. JON COOK walks into the lobby from his office somewhere down the hall, away from the front desk.

GRANT
Good morning JON.

JON COOK
Good morning GRANT. You're looking chipper
this morning.

GRANT

Yes, well-

(pause)

I'm going back to school this fall.

Is there any way that I can switch to evenings or weekends?

JON COOK

Well, congratulations. We can probably work something out.

(pause)

Oh, by the way...MR. FREELY called this morning and made some high comments on your service.

(pause as GRANT smiles)

It appears you have ingratiated yourself into his favor.

GRANT just smiles and says nothing.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE SEGMENT-PASSAGE OF SUMMER

A series of shots fade in and out. They show the busy summer nightlife of the *Republic's*. Clients come and go. People arrive arm in arm; men and younger women (and sometimes men and other men). GRANT is seen, but not heard, as he talks warmly with some important hotel patron. GRANT often shakes hands with various hotel guests. We see another shot of GRANT talking with ALLEN, both share a beer together. Another shot shows GRANT arriving to work in a new, more expensive car than his last. The last shot reveals the sun fading down and we...

CROSS FADE TO:

INT-REPUBLIC'S FRONT DESK-EARLY EVENING

GRANT is counting money behind the desk and slowly mouths the numbers as the amount increases between his fingers. A middle-aged man approaches the desk, unbeknownst to GRANT.

MAN

I hear you're going to be leaving us.

GRANT

(looking up and smiling)

I'm not leaving. MR. WILLIAMS.

MR. WILLIAMS

Oh yeah? What, is the night life too exotic for ya'? Did you get a job at the Holiday Inn?

GRANT

(chuckles)

No, not exactly. School starts next week.

MR. WILLIAMS

Ah, well good luck with it.

GRANT

TED'S already up in the room waiting on you.

MR. WILLIAMS

What...already?

(pause)

See ya' around, kid.

MR. WILLIAMS starts up the stairs, stops, and turns around back to the desk.

MR. WILLIAMS

If my wife calls, tell her I'm still in the meeting.

MR. WILLIAMS starts for the stairs. He stops in mid-stride and turns back towards GRANT.

MR. WILLIAMS

Oh, this is for your help the other night.

GRANT is handed some money and some more porn. GRANT looks confused at the tape and puts it away under the counter.

GRANT

Golly, thanks. Good night MR. WILLIAMS.

GRANT returns to his counting. However, he is soon interrupted again.

ALLEN

Counting, eh?

GRANT

Trying to, yes.

(pause)

Why am I blessed with your visit this evening?

ALLEN

Just checking on things, duty calls you know.

GRANT

You want a gift?

ALLEN

Hey yeah!

GRANT smiles and hands ALLEN the videotape. The cover is the same one that GRANT saw in I.P. FREELY'S room a couple of weeks before: a leather clad figure with German titles.

GRANT

What is with these people and porn?

ALLEN

I dunno, I once heard that they made some right here.

GRANT

In the hotel?

ALLEN

In the hotel.

(pauses-examines cover)

Wow! Thanks a lot dude.

(pause)

I'm gonna...I'm gonna just go and check things out in the back.

GRANT

(smiling)

Yeah, you do that.

ALLEN leaves and GRANT returns to counting.

GRANT

(quietly)

Pervert.

FADE OUT

FADE IN**INT-CLASSROOM-MIDAFTERNOON**

GRANT slips in and out of consciousness as he dozes in class. The professor is talking, vibrantly, to a class of about 40 people. GRANT is able to hide easily amongst the people and sleep, until he is rudely awakened..

GIRL

Hey...

A young woman, about GRANT'S age, (actually she is a few years younger due to GRANT'S numerous failed attempts at college!) pokes GRANT in the side.

GIRL

Hey...

(pause)

You're snoring!

GRANT wakes up and stares right at the girl. At first, we see an exceptionally infuriated look on his face. The ill favored expression melts as GRANT stares at this beautiful young woman.

GIRL

I know he's boring, but c'mon. He keeps looking back here at you. I heard last semester that he threw an eraser at a kid for sleeping during one of his lectures.

GRANT

(stumbling over his words)

Well, I, well...I was just...you know he's a bit boring.

The young student just smiles at GRANT and returns to taking notes in her notebook. GRANT looks at her a bit longer and turns his attention to his empty page and begins to write feverishly. This time GRANT follows the lecture.

CUT TO:

EXT-OUTSIDE OF CAMPUS BUILDING-AFTERNOON

GRANT pushes against the crowd after class as he moves through the exit door. He is desperately looking around for the young student that was sitting next to him in class. He spots her, a little ways down the sidewalk and runs after.

GRANT

Hey.

(pause)

Hey, wait up.

The GIRL turns and looks at GRANT and smiles. She waits for him to catch up. Once he arrives, she continues to walk down the sidewalk.

GRANT

Hey, I didn't catch your name.

GIRL

That's probably because I didn't give it to you.

GRANT looks hurt.

ANGIE

It's ANGIE-

(pause)

ANGIE HUTCHINS.

GRANT looks at her intently.

GRANT

You're not related to STAN HUTCHINS are you.
You know, the President of-

ANGIE
(interrupting)
Unfortunately. He's my step dad.
(ANGIE seems a bit angry)
That's all anybody ever seems to know about
me.

GRANT
Easy, I just-
(pause)
Are you an HR major too?

GRANT feels it is wise to change the subject, due to ANGIE'S
growing displeasure with his company.

ANGIE
A what major?

GRANT
You know hotel and management.

ANGIE
Oh, yeah.

GRANT
I just wanted to say thanks for keeping me
from a launched eraser.

ANGIE
No problem. Glad I could help.

GRANT
I don't normally do this, but...
(pause)
Do you...would you wanna maybe, get an early
lunch with me.

ANGIE pauses in her walk and looks at GRANT. The miffed look leaves her face and she begins to warm up to him. Finally, she smiles.

ANGIE

Ok.

(pause)

What's your name?

GRANT

It's GRANT...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-REPUBLIC'S FRONT DESK-EVENING

GRANT hands some change to a customer and smiles. The young couple (probably legitimate and honest business, it's too early in the evening for sleazy activities yet) smile and say...

LADY

Thanks.

GRANT

Enjoy your stay, ma'am.

Behind the couple is a man, about 30, holding a brief case. He seems a bit impatient. Sweat trickles from his brow and he is constantly looking around the room. Save GRANT, the two are alone in the hotel lobby.

MAN

(speaking with a thick European accent)

Are you GRANT?

GRANT

Yes sir, what can I do for you?

CONRAD

(handing GRANT his card)

GRANT, I am called CONRAD PRICE. I vaz told
dat you are ein man dat I can trust.

GRANT

What's this?

Wrapped around CONRAD'S card is a \$100 bill. GRANT looks up
at CONRAD who is smiling, somewhat nervously.

CONRAD

It's payment for zome zervice.

(pause-scared tone)

I vaz told I could trust you...

GRANT

(pocketing the money)

Of course you can trust me.

(pause)

What can I do for you?

CONRAD

(holding up the case. he begins loudly)

Der case...

(pause-CONRAD looks around and then
whispers)

Der case contains zomething sehr valuable.

GRANT

Valuable?

CONRAD

Sehr valuable.

(pause)

I need to leave it for ein MR. FRANK
CARDEMON.

GRANT
(taking the briefcase)
FRANK CARDEMON I see. I will protect it with
my life.

GRANT starts to fumble with the lock.

GRANT
It's locked.

CONRAD
(yelling)
Don't open it!
(quieter)
Please open it not. When MR. CARDEMON arrives,
he will pay you \$100.
(pause)
Understand?

GRANT
Two-hundred dollars!
(pause)
Wow. This must be some pretty damn important
stuff.

GRANT begins to shake the case a little

CONRAD
(yelling)
Please...
(quieter)
Please, careful with it MR. GRANT.

GRANT
You can just call me GRANT.
(pausing)
It'll be ok. I swear.

GRANT makes a small cross on his heart. CONRAD frowns, turns, and walks through the lobby door. He turns back to look at GRANT...GRANT smiles at CONRAD and waves goodbye.

GRANT
(laughing)
Good by my fuehrer.

GRANT shakes the case violently and throws it on the floor behind the counter.

CLOCK-WIPE

FRANK CARDEMON enters the front door of the lobby like a military general. Accompanying him are two large men wearing sunglasses, despite the fact that it is 9:00 pm at night. The armed guards' size is not due to excessive muscle. However, they are corpulent men at their middles. Their wide girth is forced into their small suits. Both wear small black derbies on their heads. GRANT finds the entire situation a little amusing. This is evident by his huge ear-to-ear grin. Thinking the briefcase only contains something trivial, he makes light of the situation.

FRANK CARDEMON
I believe you have something for me.

GRANT
Ah, yes. The notorious briefcase.

FRANK glares at GRANT as he grabs the case from behind the desk and plops it firmly on the counter. FRANK grabs the case from GRANT and opens it away from his view. GRANT strains to try to see what is inside. The two men are constantly looking at everything in the lobby.

GRANT

So?

FRANK

So, what?

GRANT

So...what is it?

(pause)

What's the big mystery about the case.

FRANK

Nothing concerning you.

(pause)

Thanks.

FRANK closes the case and pulls it hastily from the counter. He smiles at GRANT and places a one hundred-dollar bill on the counter. He abruptly turns and leaves, the two men follow glaring at GRANT before they turn and leave.

GRANT

Thanks so very much.

GRANT, observably amused with the entire situation, returns to his magazine on the counter. Here he thought that the new shift would not be that exciting. The same weird locals operate during the evening as well as late at night.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-RESTAURANT DINING-MORNING

GRANT sits across the table from ANGIE. He energetically tells her about last night's events. She sits, listening to him and enjoying her meal.

GRANT
...and then, CARDEMON comes in-

ANGIE
-the car guy-

GRANT
-that's him. Anyways he comes in with these two guys...he must think that he is a local crime boss or something.

ANGIE
That's not funny...what if they had guns.

GRANT laughs, trying to impress ANGIE.

GRANT
Not likely. Besides, ALLEN was there.

ANGIE
Is this the same ALLEN that locked himself accidentally in the freezer the other night?

GRANT
(clears his throat)
Yes.

ANGIE

Sounds like a real superman.

(pause)

Really GRANT, you shouldn't mess with people you don't know.

(pause)

What was in the briefcase anyways?

GRANT

I dunno. He wouldn't let me see.

(pause)

Probably gay-porn...who knows.

ANGIE

(mouth full)

What hotel did you say you worked at?

GRANT

The Republic. Downtown.

ANGIE

That's an old building, my step dad goes there for meetings a lot.

GRANT stares at his food avoiding ANGIE'S gaze. GRANT coughs up some food in surprise. He quickly wipes his face.

ANGIE

(concerned look)

Do you ever get to see him.

GRANT

(Still staring at his food)

Ah...every once in a while.

ANGIE

Hey...

GRANT

Hey what?

ANGIE

Why don't you come over sometime and meet him and my mom.

GRANT

Ah...

(pause)

I don't think that would be a good idea.

ANGIE

Why not, I keep telling mom all about you. She'd love to put a face with the stories.

(pause)

STAN'S an asshole, but you should still meet him.

GRANT

Yeah...but I-

ANGIE

Listen...I know you're a bit shy...

(pause)

...besides, you have already seen STAN, you just don't know each other.

GRANT

All right, all right...

ANGIE

Perfect. They're hosting a party tonight. Stop by, in any event, it'll be free food.

GRANT smiles uncomfortably towards ANGIE. She seems to not notice his discomfort with the situation. He returns to his food.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT-HUTCHINS' HOME-NIGHT

GRANT sweats profusely at the door. His hand shakes as he rings the doorbell. It seems like an eternity before it is answered. ANGIE arrives and opens the door. She greets GRANT with a huge smile. She grabs his arm and leads him into the hallway.

ANGIE

Good evening.

GRANT

Good evening.

ANGIE

Come on, they're in here.

ANGIE leads GRANT the main living area. A number of people mingle in different locations about the room. A small group speaks quietly over in one corner, while a few others are seated on the couch. ANGIE'S mother moves towards GRANT to greet him.

ANGIE

Mother, this is GRANT.

GRANT extends a hand towards ANGIE'S mother. She ignores it and kisses GRANT once on each cheek. He seems a bit confused and out of place.

MOM

Well, hello darling.

(pause)

You can call me JUDY.

In the corner, STAN is talking quietly with a few of the other guests. His mingling ceases, however, when he notices GRANT talking with his wife and stepdaughter. His calm and relaxed demeanor turns into one of fear and anger. He frowns and locks gazes with GRANT. He moves towards the intruder.

ANGIE

This is my stepfather, STAN.

(pause)

STAN, this is GRANT, he goes to-

ANGIE stops as she senses the tension between the two. JUDY HUTCHINS stares at GRANT, then back at STAN.

JUDY

Do you two know each other?

STAN

No...no, I just think...

(pause)

GRANT here looks a bit familiar.

GRANT says nothing but grins at STAN. JUDY decides to ignore the uncomfortable situation.

JUDY

Well then. Would you like some hors d'oeuvres?
Or, a glass of wine perhaps.

STAN

(keeping his eyes aimed on GRANT)

GRANT, why don't you come and meet some
friends.

The two walked away from JUDY and ANGIE HUTCHINS towards the center of the room.

STAN
(quietly)
What are you doing here?

GRANT
Why, I'm here to meet you.
(pauses and extends a hand)
Hi, I'm GRANT CONNOLLY, I'm pleased-

STAN
Shut-up. You'll leave quietly if
you know what's good for you.

GRANT
What are you gonna' do.
(pause)
Perhaps I should just go inform JUDY
about VICTORIA...
(pause)
Oh, MRS. HUTCHINS?

STAN
What are you doing...you fool.

JUDY
Yes darling?

GRANT
I was just-

STAN
STAN here was wondering if he could get a glass
of Champaign.

JUDY
Well of course.

JUDY leaves to fetch a glass of wine. GRANT turns and grins at STAN. STAN glowers. GRANT turns and walks away.

STAN
(snaps)
Where are you going?

GRANT
To mingle. Goodbye MR. FREELY.

GRANT moves towards the hors d'oeuvre table. Someone taps him on the shoulder.

MR. WILLIAMS
GRANT!

GRANT turns.

GRANT
Well, hello MR. WILLIAMS.
(pause)
What brings you here?

MR. WILLIAMS
Same as you I guess.
(pause)
Come over here and meet my wife.

MR. WILLIAMS (continued)
Sara, this GRANT. He works at the hotel where the firm holds its bi-weekly meetings.

SARA
(shaking hands)
Hello. It's a pleasure to meet you.

The three smile at each other shortly, TED moves into the trio's terse conversation.

TED
(to MR. WILLIAMS)
MIKE, whose this.

MR. WILLIAMS
GRANT I would like you to meet my apprentice,
TED.

GRANT
Nice to meet you TED.

TED
(offers a weak handshake)
Ooh, nice to meet you.

JUDY approaches with a glass of Champaign for GRANT.

GRANT
Ah, MRS. HUTCHINS...where's your bathroom.

JUDY
(pointing)
Down that hall to the left.

GRANT
(walking)
Thanks.

GRANT walks down the hall. Two figures are talking, but we cannot see exactly whom they are. As GRANT approaches, the light reveals their faces: FRANK CARDEMON and CONRAD PRICE. GRANT quickly ducks into the first available door. The door is a bit hard to open, but he manages to push his way through. GRANT'S chin drops to the floor. Inside the room, chains and a swing hang from the ceiling. A leather suit lies crumpled on the floor. A sign hanging on the back of the room is in

German, it reads: *DEUTSCHE FRAUEN* in bold, black letters.
GRANT is startled again by a tap on the shoulder.

CONRAD PRICE
Vas are you doing?

GRANT moves past CARDEMON and CONRAD and moves swiftly for the front door. For the first time this evening, we see GRANT perspiring. He moves quickly, but quietly towards the front door-his exit to freedom. ANGIE blocks his path.

ANGIE
Where are you going?

GRANT
Gotta go. I'll call you soon.

GRANT kisses her gently on the cheek and walks through the door before ANGIE can refuse.

CUT TO:

INT-GRANT'S CAR-NIGHT

GRANT is driving down the road away from the HUTCHIN'S home. He is biting his nails and we can see sweat beading up on the front of his face. He is driving somewhat erratically.

GRANT
(to himself)
Shit...shit...shit.
(snapping his fingers)
ALLEN!

CUT TO:

EXT/INT-ALLEN'S TRAILER-NIGHT

GRANT flies into the ramshackle driveway of ALLEN'S trailer. The driveway is constructed of loose gravel. Two broken down trucks line each side of the drive. Surprisingly, a newer model truck sits at the head of the drive. GRANT'S car squeaks to a stop. He barely has time to climb out and he runs to the door, pounding on it frantically.

CUT TO:

ALLEN is enthralled with some professional wrestling program when he hears the knock. He rushes to the door.

ALLEN (ALLEN'S POV)
Who is it? Whose there?

GRANT (o.s.)
It's GRANT. Open up.
(pause)
Please ALLEN, it's important.

ALLEN (o.s) (GRANT'S POV)
Dude.

ALLEN unlatches the bolt, unhooks the chain and slowly opens the door. GRANT pushes himself inside. The inside of the trailer is unbefitting the outside. Apparently, ALLEN is independently wealthy. Why, we really do not know. The trailer looks more like an elegant apartment than anything else. Soft, unstained carpet covers the floor. A big screen, flat paneled television sits in one corner. At least six visible speakers surround the giant box. GRANT takes one look around; he has concerns that are more pressing.

GRANT
(his roaming eyes stop on the hot
tub on the tiled floor in the corner)
Listen...I need some advice.

ALLEN

Sure...sure...whatever you need.

(pause)

Let ol' ALLEN solve the case.

GRANT cannot help but crack a smile at ALLEN'S expense. Yet, this is lost to ALLEN. ALLEN just seems happy that someone is visiting, let alone asking him for advice.

GRANT

Hey, is that a plasma TV.

ALLEN

Yeah, dude. Check it out.

GRANT

Never mind, listen I've met this girl-

ALLEN

(interrupting)

Is she hot?

GRANT

(irritated)

Um...yeah, she's pretty good looking-

ALLEN

(motioning his chest)

Does she have big boobs?

GRANT

(annoyed)

Well, yeah actually.

(pause)

Anyways, let me finish.

She's becoming very important to me.

(pause)

I went over to visit her parents tonight for the first time and-

ALLEN
(interrupting)
You hit on her mom.
(pause)
Does she have big boobs too?

GRANT
No, ALLEN. What the hell is wrong with you?

ALLEN
(confused)
Nothing, you were the one with the problem.

GRANT is getting frustrated. Either ALLEN is deliberately being annoying, or he really is an idiot.

GRANT
Ok, to make a long story short.

ALLEN
Too late.

GRANT
(glaring)
This girl, her step dad, this girl's step dad is STAN HUTCHINS.

GRANT sighs and falls back on the couch, exhausted. He rubs his temples. The silence between the two is loud except for the incessant interjection emanating from ALLEN'S home theater system.

TV (o.s.)
Oh my god...thrown onto the metal railing.
I don't imagine that he will recover from that one. It's utter carnage.

GRANT looks up at ALLEN.

GRANT
Well?

ALLEN
Well, what?

GRANT
STAN HUTCHINS! Don't you think he's gonna
rat me out? He's gonna do *something*. Besides,
you know that porn I gave you?

ALLEN smiles.

ALLEN
Yeah.

GRANT
You know the cover?

ALLEN nods.

GRANT
I saw the room that's on it.
(pause)
In STAN'S home.

ALLEN
Who?

GRANT
STAN HUTCHI-
(pause)
I mean, I.P. FREELY.

ALLEN

Oh.

ALLEN pauses to contemplate, patting a finger against his pursed lips.

ALLEN

Aw, relax. I've seen this before.

GRANT

You've seen a Republic employee date a University President's daughter, who knows what kinds of x-rated activities he does behind closed doors. This same employee also knows about the town's liberal use of prostitutes and its thriving underground porn industry. You've really seen *this* before, ALLEN?

ALLEN

Well, no. Not this exactly.

(pause)

But something close to it.

GRANT

Well, what exactly?

ALLEN

With ERIC, the last guy. The guy you replaced.

GRANT

What happened to him?

ALLEN

He tried to blackmail FRANK CARDEMON-